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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/665,284	09/22/2003	Tetsuya Sakai	243017US2SRD	5623

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OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.
1940 DUKE STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

EXAMINER

SAINT CYR, LEONARD

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2626

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	03/23/2007	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Notice of this Office communication was sent electronically on the above-indicated "Notification Date" and has a shortened statutory period for reply of 3 MONTHS from 03/23/2007.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/665,284

Applicant(s)

SAKAI, TETSUYA

Examiner

Leonard Saint-Cyr

Art Unit

2626

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1 – 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Liddy et al., (US Patent 6,006,221) in view of Chan et al., (US Patent 6,604,101).

As per claims 1, 5, and 9, Liddy et al., teach a question answering system in which a first knowledge database including a knowledge source of a first language, and a second knowledge database including a knowledge source of a second language (Abstract, lines 3 – 5; “retrieve documents in different languages based on a native language query”) are used to obtain an answer (document) to a question (query) inputted in the first language by a user, the system comprising:

a first acquisition unit configured to retrieve, from the first knowledge database, a first prospective answer of the first language to the question (“retrieve documents from a database that includes documents in at least one other language” suggests retrieving document in the native language also; col.2, lines 44 – 49);

a second acquisition unit configured to retrieve, from the second knowledge database, a second prospective answer of the second language to the question

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translated into the second language ("retrieve documents from a database that includes documents in at least one other language"; col.2, lines 44 – 49);

a second translation unit configured to translate the second prospective answer ("foreign text") of the second language into the first language ("translation of relevant documents; col.3, lines 10 – 14, and 26 – 28);

a processing unit configured to rank the first prospective answer in conjunction with a translation result of the second prospective answer; and an output unit configured to output any one answer according to a result of ranking performed by the processing unit (" the query's representation is then compared to each document's representative to generate a measure of relevance of the document to the query ... highly relevant can be used to inform subsequent queries"; col.3, lines 5 – 10; col.8, lines 1 -3).

However, Liddy et al., do not specifically teach a first translation unit configured to translate the question into the second language.

Chan et al., teach that a translator translates the keyword into an equivalent in target language and gives an output in the target language (col.6, lines 3 – 6).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to translate the source language query in target language as taught by Chan et al., in Liddy et al., because that would improve the system by only focus on target languages containing relevant documents.

As per claims 2, 6, and 10, Liddy et al., further disclose processing unit ranks the first prospective answer in conjunction with the translation result of the second

prospective answer according to whether the number of retrieval hits in the first knowledge database and the second knowledge database ("retrieving and relevant – ranking documents written in any of the supported languages"; col.3, lines 60 - 64).

As per claims 3, 7, and 11, Liddy et al., further disclose an answer quality determination unit configured to determine simplicity or coverage of each of the first prospective answer and the second prospective answer based on lexical processing, wherein the processing unit ranks the first prospective answer in conjunction with the translation result of the second prospective answer according to the simplicity or coverage determined by the answer quality determination unit ("highly relevant ranking documents" suggests quality determination of coverage; col.3, lines 5 – 10, and 60).

As per claims 4, 8, and 12, Liddy et al., further disclose an answer freshness determination unit configured to determine a degree of freshness of each of the first prospective answer and the second prospective answer, wherein the processing unit ranks the first prospective answer in conjunction with the translation result of the second prospective answer according to the degree of freshness determined by the answer freshness determination unit ("highly relevant ranking documents" suggests determining the degree of freshness; col.3, lines 5 – 10, and 60).

Conclusion

3. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Soderstrom et al., (US Patent 6,741,982) teach a system and method for retrieving data from a database system.

Ushioda et al., (US Patent 6,602,300) teach an apparatus and method for retrieving data from a document database.

Agichtein et al., (US PAP 2002/0169595) teach a method for retrieving answers from an information retrieval system.

Pan et al., (US Patent 7,058,626) teach a method and system for providing native language query service.

Ho (US Patent 5,884,302) teaches a system and method to answer a question.

Ho et al., (US Patent 6,498, 921) teach a method and system to answer a natural-language question.

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Leonard Saint-Cyr whose telephone number is (571) 272-4247. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon- Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richemond Dorvil can be reached on (571) 272-7602. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571)-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Ls
03/16/07



RICHEMOND DORVIL
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER